

# The Eclectic Theosophist

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## IN THIS NEW YEAR

A. TREVOR BARKER

The following is a talk given at the London Headquarters of the T.S. (Point Loma) in January 1934 by the then President of the English Section. Its ringing words, though spoken nearly forty years ago, still reverberate with a practical message.—EDS.

I expect you all remember that phrase of G. de P.'s—"Love is the cement of the Universe: learn to forgive, learn to love. Each one of you is an incarnate God. Be it!" Do you realize how many of us at the present time are prevented from liberating ourselves from all our old troubles and miseries, and the things that are holding us back in our own personal lives; the things we have erected, the obstacles that we have put there with our own hands by a hundred-and-one misunderstandings of our own sublime teachings? Take the doctrine of reincarnation: how many of my Brother Theosophists have I heard say, "Ah! but to gain real illumination, real knowledge, and the power to help people will take me lives of effort. I am only beginning now." And they think they have said something. Well, they have! They have erected the most gigantic barrier with their own hands to gaining that knowledge here and now. Do you think, do you believe, that the great Masters of Wisdom have given us the Teachings of Theosophy, with its message of hope and inspiration to men, for the sake of one or two or three or a few? Oh! It is an impossible thought. We have to understand that Theosophy and its realization is possible for us here and now; and it is because so many have not believed in its practical possibilities that Theosophy is not today a tremendous success all over the world—I mean as a Movement. Often do we ponder together as to why the millions do not take Theosophy, and that is why: because we do not believe—really and truly believe—that it is for the man in the street. We have got what is really (although we do not recognize it) a kind of egotistic feeling "Ah! But it is only for the few." That is not true. Theosophy is for all. Just think of that sentence "Each one of you is an incarnate God. Be it!" Would G. de P. say that if it were impossible? Obviously not. It means that every man, woman and child can, if he will, gain something of the inspiration of his own Inner Divinity, and find the way out of all difficulties through the power that that alone can give him, through that energy which is his only Savior in this world or the world to come.

You remember what H.P.B. said in *The Secret Doctrine* on page 280 of Volume I:

"the Eternal KARANA alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through 'the still small voice' of our spiritual consciousness . . . making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only

priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*."

That is a virile doctrine, a manly doctrine, and in the year that is opening before us I do pray with all my heart that those who have been touched by the real fire of Theosophy, who feel it as a living force pulsing and beating within them, will come and join hands with us here; I mean our fellow Theosophists, members of this Society or any other, sitting in this room here and outside it. I hope they will come and get vocal about it, and say what is in their hearts. And if they have difficulties, I hope they will come and share these difficulties with their Brother Theosophists, with the faith that if Theosophy means anything at all "*the way out*," in terms of the Masters' teaching, will be given to them. I have proved that to be possible in my own life, and others are proving it in theirs; and it is on that that the real spiritual fellowship of the future will be built.

I tell you, there is no brotherhood, *Compaigns*, amongst those who only have a lip-Theosophy, an intellectual Theosophy. It is all very well to explain the Universe in the most marvellous language; but, if you have not experienced the Divine Life in your own heart, and if you have not found the Companionship of fellow-Theosophists who have likewise experienced it, and felt its saving and transforming power, then you do not know the meaning of what real brotherhood can be. Real brotherhood is a thing of the soul, of the spirit, which finds expression here in human life. But believe me, though you may have all the compassion in the universe, you cannot build the Temple of Wisdom that the Masters are trying to get us to build, out of men and women who have not brought about that spiritual revolution in their own lives which comes from *realization*—because they have experienced and know for themselves.

Shall we not together, in the year that is now opening before us, in our work, in our studies, in our Lodge meetings, concentrate upon the essential things, the vital things, the things that will help us to live our lives? Let us share with others those difficulties that we want to overcome; and let us be willing to give to others the light that we ourselves have found, and on occasion to accept helpful advice and criticism . . .

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"*This Small Circle . . .*"

The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas repose, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all.

—Matthew Arnold: *The Function of Criticism*

## THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL

IVERSON L. HARRIS

The most vital teachings of religion, philosophy, and science, are those which throw light on human relationships — family, community, nation and humanity; in other words, on life as it is on earth, here and now, in all its phases, physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual. There is a perpetual ebb and flow between emphasis on the ideal and emphasis on the actual — as perhaps best represented in ancient China by Lao-Tse and Confucius.

When the ideal is divorced from the actual, it becomes at best quixotic or sentimental, and at worst fantastic, superstitious, or fanatic. It is then rightly branded as 'the opiate of the people'; for, instead of giving men the spiritual elixir of an awakened mind, which brings 'the peace that passeth all understanding,' it puts them to sleep with the soporifics of blind faith, emotionalism, or credulity. On the other hand, when the actual turns its back on the ideal it degenerates into sordid selfishness — a poisonous bootleg that drives men mad.

The woods are full of both kinds of addicts at the present time — on the one hand, people drugged with the opiates of dogmatism or fantastic pseudo-mysticism, and on the other hand, people mad with the moonshine of unilluminated theories and half-truths about economics and politics. It is part of the mission of Theosophy to teach men to follow 'The Middle Way' pointed out by the Buddha and the Christ — 'to render unto Caesar those things which are Caesar's and to render unto God those things which are God's.'

All men may be divided — or they daily and hourly divide themselves — into two classes: those who *think* and those who merely *react*. Few of us are wise enough always to enroll with the thinkers; few are so far divorced from the human thinking principle innate in all of us that we never do any thinking for ourselves at all. But those who keep always in touch with actuality and yet ever use their divine power of thought and reason in striving towards the ideal, are the salt of the earth. They are on their way to becoming the Philosopher-Kings of whom Plato wrote in his *Republic*.

Those who merely react to the impact of their environment and the stimuli of their personal desires and animal propensities are they who will always have to be regimented; and it is they who make necessary the endless series of laws and rules and regulations which so afflict our modern world. The mass of mankind will always be forcing upon themselves additional restrictions of their liberties, in order to prevent them from injuring their neighbors. But the wise man is truly free, because his desires are few and the world that he lives in is limited only by the scope of his own thoughts. The greatest minds of all ages are his *confrères* and his home is the Universe. In the words of Vergil:

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Quique metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum,  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari—*

"happy the man who has learned the causes of things, and has put under his feet all fears, and inexorable fate, and the noisy strife of the hell of greed."

## THE PSYCHIC WORLD—BEWARE!

G. DE PURUCKER

In *The Esoteric Tradition*, II, p. 889, G. de Purucker is answering the question whether it is possible for a scientist of today artificially to 'construct' a living soul. His answer is that it would indeed be possible "if our scientists had the knowledge and the wisdom and the power enabling them to combine the psycho-vital fluid of the Monadic Ray with latent living matter as composed of the mere chemical elements. But," he adds, "with all respect to the great men working in our chemical laboratories and in biological experimental chambers, one is bound to confess that it is too much to ask of them. The scientists of the far-distant aeons of the future, however, in what in Theosophy are called the Sixth and Seventh great Root-Races to come, will undoubtedly be able to do this; but it is greatly doubtful if before that time any human mind will have the knowledge or the power to accomplish that alchemical feat of real 'creative' magic. If it be ever done within our times, it will happen almost as a 'stroke of luck,' nor is it likely that the feat could be repeated."

There follows on this a lengthy, but what we feel is a most necessary, footnote warning the reader of the effects of an inrush of psychic influences upon the world such as H. P. Blavatsky foresaw the 20th century would witness. The psychic conditions are obviously with us. Have we the moral balance not to be engulfed and 'used' by these forces? Are we wise enough to exploit them only constructively? Have we the discrimination to use them only for benign ends?

We feel that what Dr. de Purucker says on these questions is of gravest concern and therefore we quote in full the several paragraphs of this particular footnote No. 396.—EDS.

Here once more, and with extreme reluctance, one feels the need of stating that there is a good deal of the teaching of the Esoteric Philosophy which simply cannot be openly stated in a published book, because such teaching belongs to the highly recondite and extremely difficult thought of the esoteric studies reserved for the few.

The author of the present work desires to state once for all, and with all the emphasis at his command, that neither this declaration of certain esoteric teachings which are too sacred to be given to the public, nor other similar declarations made in the course of the present work, are in any sense of the word to be considered or looked upon as 'claims' made by him to possessing 'superior' or wonderful knowledge. The author absolutely disavows not only any such intention of 'claiming' anything, but must point out that merely stating that the Esoteric Philosophy contains wide ranges of teaching or doctrine which are incommunicable to the public is making no 'claims' whatsoever, but is the simple statement of something that ought to be known to every student of the Archaic Wisdom.

The writer of these lines has immense and profound sympathy with those who look askance and with suspicion upon any claimants to occult powers or occult knowledge; for he, fully as much as others, is keenly sensible of the mischief and confusion that such claimants have brought about in the Theosophical Movement. There are today abroad in the world associations or societies or organizations of many different kinds, some of them claiming either new and greater revelations than H. P. Blavatsky brought to the Western World, and usually as being from the source from which she drew her great knowledge, or averring that they and their respective heads draw their alleged 'wisdom' and so-called 'secret teaching' from a source still higher than that upon which H. P. Blavatsky drew.

Now with all the charity in the world towards honest students, whether they be Theosophists or not, and with no wish whatsoever to seem or to be inconsiderate or unkind, the author of these lines feels impelled to say that in his

considered opinion virtually all of these various claims to special spiritual powers or privileges are fraudulent shams. Such is his own individual and considered judgment in the matter, and he bases this opinion upon two facts which are as follows: (a) the statements, writings, averments, or 'claims' of these especial groups generally wander so far from and contain so little of that Archaic Wisdom which in the present work is called the Esoteric Tradition, and which throughout the ages has been universal over the globe, that they thus lack the primal requisite of truth, both esoteric and exoteric, which is *universality*, and lack it both in substance and in form. Thus the greater and more important test of true Esotericism, to wit, is its universality in all ages and in all races of men as evidenced in that common DOCTRINE which all the great Religions and Philosophies of the human race embody as their spiritual substance; and (b) it is virtually impossible to set forth or to publish esoteric truth in any manner, except by pointing to what the great sages and seers of the ages have left behind them as their respective Messages.

One must look for the cause of the rising of these various erratic associations to that inrush of psychic influences which H. P. Blavatsky and her great Teachers from the beginning of the modern Theosophical Movement taught was about to take place; and there is no part of the human constitution which is so uncertain, so erratic in its processes, so dangerous to follow as a guide, as the psychical portion of man's being. It is full of dangers and pitfalls to the unwary; and there is a deep pathos in the fact that it is just these things of psychic stamp and character which appeal so to men of our time. Psychism in all its forms, relatively good, downright bad, and indifferent, is something which unfortunately appeals directly to the credulous, the gullible, the unwise, and the foolish; and the earnest Theosophist should never hesitate openly to proclaim that one of the main purposes in founding the modern Theosophical Movement was to do what could be done to stem the then impending inrushing tide or flow of psychism in its various forms. Where psychism is, Spirituality usually flies out at the window — because evicted by man's folly; where Spirituality is allowed to enlighten the mind and refine the heart by its benign and inspiring influence, the psychical in all its forms shrivels into the bundle of illusions which it actually is.

All these various psychical bodies or societies are posterior in time to the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky and others. Some of them broke off from the Theosophical Movement, while others arose outside of its ranks; although all younger than the Theosophical Society, they rarely if ever acknowledge the debt they owe to it in so far as concerns the teachings which they have one and all taken from it, and which teachings form whatever is worthwhile in them. Without any philosophy that is worthy of the name, save what has been cribbed from the Theosophical Society, with a religious atmosphere which is insignificant and a science which is either mere popular trifling or worse, one turns from an inspection of them with relief.

Yet even here in these various movements, some quasi-theosophical without acknowledging it, and some frankly anti-theosophical and vaunting it, there are doubtless numbers of very kindly and good people who in their search for truth have not yet come to our doors. Without question the best

way for Theosophists to handle this situation is with great gentleness and with unending kindness both of heart and mind and with an ever-ready desire to extend to truth-seekers from whatsoever quarter they may come such portion of the Ancient Wisdom as we ourselves may be privileged to have made our own.

As Edwin Markhim (in his poem "Outwitted") said:

He drew a circle that shut me out —  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in!

Finally, the writer of the present work does not here make, nor has he ever made, 'claims' to anything whatsoever; he has given in the present work and in his former books, something of what he himself has been taught; but this statement is made not as a 'claim,' but as a simple averment of fact which the reader is at full liberty to accept or reject, according to his conscience and his best reason.

The proof of the body of the truth of any teaching or group of teachings is not and cannot be based on 'claims,' though made by the high gods themselves, but solely on the intrinsic and inherent merits of said teaching or body of teachings; and upon this ground of merit alone, such merit comprising universality, spirituality, mutual coherency, and logical consecution in thought, any teaching whatsoever must rest. It is true enough that great names and brilliant reputations lend splendor to a teaching, and in themselves evoke respect; but even brilliant reputations and great names are no absolute proofs that any teaching coming from such source is true. This is especially true in Esotericism, whose doctrines persuade the mind and sway the heart solely because of their intrinsic value and obvious merit, and on these alone they must stand or fall.

#### Point Loma Publications:

*Clothed With the Sun: The Mystery-Tale of Jesus the Avatara*, by G. de Purucker  
Paperback, 45 pp. \$1.00

*The Mahatmas and Genuine Occultism*  
by G. de Purucker  
Paperback, 73 pp. \$1.50

*Wind of the Spirit*, by G. de Purucker  
Paperback, 282 pp. \$3.25.

*Golden Precepts: A Guide to Enlightened Living*  
by G. de Purucker  
Hardcase, 192 pp. \$5.00; Paperback, \$3.00

*Glossary of Sanskrit Terms: and a Key to Their Correct Pronunciation*, by Geoffrey A. Barborka  
Paperback, 76 pp. \$1.25

*Mme. Blavatsky Defended*, by Iverson L. Harris  
Paperback, 174 pp. \$3.00.

*Theosophy Under Fire*, by Iverson L. Harris  
Paperback, 88 pp. \$3.00.

*The Wisdom of Lao-tse*, by Iverson L. Harris  
Paperback, 36 pp. \$0.75

*The Wisdom of Confucius*, by Iverson L. Harris  
Paperback, 45 pp. \$0.75

*The Golden Stairs*, by Iverson L. Harris  
Paperback, 24 pp. \$ .25

*Does Chance or Justice Rule our Lives?*  
by Nils Amneus,  
Paperback, 98 pp. \$2.00      40% to Dealers

## TEACHERS AND DISCIPLES

The United Lodge of Theosophists has for many years performed a most useful mission in issuing occasional supplements to its regular periodical *Theosophy*, consisting of reprints of original articles by H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. These, now grouped under subject matter, in convenient sized booklets of 40 or so pages, should prove most valuable both to the Theosophical student wishing to refresh his mind continually with the original teachings and also to the serious inquirer. Recent booklets reaching our desk are *Theosophical Philosophy*, containing articles by H. P. Blavatsky on "What is Truth?", and "Old Philosophers and Modern Critics" (Price 35 cents); and *Teachers and Disciples* (Price 50 cents) which presents articles by H. P. B. on the important subject of chelaship. To give the reader a clearer idea of the contents of this latter collection we quote in full its Foreword. Orders for both these booklets may be placed with The Theosophy Company, 245 West 33rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90007. — EDS.

The articles by H. P. Blavatsky presented here represent an extraordinary achievement, consisting, for the Western world, of an introduction to almost wholly unfamiliar conceptions—ideas, moreover, which ran counter to the tendencies and direction of thought in the nineteenth century. The objections which were raised to these ideas, and the confusion to which they led, are also dealt with by H.P.B. in these articles. Her aim was to call attention to the far-reaching possibilities of human development implicit in the teachings of Theosophy, and at the same time to restore to the modern world some realizing awareness of the rigors and hazards which must, in the nature of things, attend all efforts toward the inner 'becoming' which leads at last to adept knowledge, powers, and wisdom.

The closely allied meanings of the words 'disciple' and 'discipline'—both from the same root—soon become evident, since the life of the disciple encompasses the ardent pursuit of both study and self-control. The moral requirements of discipleship are continuously emphasized by Madame Blavatsky, for the reason that she was addressing persons who had grown up in a civilization in which there was increasing separation between the idea of truth and that of duty and responsibility. In the undertaking of discipleship, science and religion become aspects of a single body of knowledge, and the focus of this unification is the individual aspirant to truth.

The first article in this selection, "Lodges of Magic," was printed by H.P.B. in *Lucifer* for October, 1888. It deals with the ever-present tendency, in a commercial civilization, to exploit mysterious or secret things in the fraudulent attempt to profit by dealing in what can neither be bought nor sold. Then the author turns to the expectation of some people, common then as now, that it is possible to teach the secrets of occultism in a brief course of specialized instruction. H.P.B.'s reply is in terms of the prerequisites for gaining hidden knowledge, to which she adds an account of the difficulties experienced by the beginner or neophyte in telling true from false teaching.

"Mahatmas and Chelas," first published in *The Theosophist* for July, 1884, gives actual instruction, although in great generality, in the laws which govern the relationships between those high Teachers who are called Mahatmas, and the disciples known in the East as Chelas.

The very idea of individual psycho-moral development

had been all but lost to the West, before the launching of the Theosophical Movement in 1875, so that, after the wonderful phenomena of the Spiritualists became known (they began to attract public attention in 1848), the mediums of the séance halls were often regarded as persons who had reached to a desirable inner condition. It became the task of H. P. Blavatsky to point out that the susceptibility of the medium to external psychic influences is an abnormal and pathological distortion of normal sensitivity. Under control, and with the guidance of moral philosophy, such psychic capacities might lead to another sort of growth. This all-important distinction is established and elaborated upon by H.P.B. in her article, "Are Chelas 'Mediums'?", which was originally published in *The Theosophist* for June, 1884.

"Chelas," printed in *The Theosophist* for October, 1884, provides a brief discussion of the various applications of this term, giving insight into the conditions and tests of chelaship.

"The Theosophical Mahatmas" was Madame Blavatsky's rejoinder to a 'manifesto' issued by two Americans, complaining of neglect by Eastern Teachers or Adepts, and the article was doubtless for this reason printed in William Q. Judge's magazine, *The Path*, published in the United States, in the issue of December, 1886. More than any other discussion, perhaps, this article shows the difficulty encountered by Westerners in attempting the path of occultism before gaining a thorough philosophical understanding of what is involved. In "Chelas" H.P.B. had said that "sentimentality is not the equipment for a Chela," and in this article she declares that emotionalism "is *not* philosophy." "The Theosophical Mahatmas" is a strong statement concerning the path of discipleship. Its rules, H.P.B. shows, are indeed the laws of nature—of man's higher nature—to which no exceptions are made.

In "Chelas and Lay Chelas," which appeared in the Supplement to *The Theosophist* for July, 1883, Madame Blavatsky defined chelaship and provided an account of the qualifications which for ages had been regarded as essential in those who aspire to the path to adeptship. She here spoke of certain rare individuals in the West whose personal qualities gained them the attention of the Adept-Teachers. She gave the reason for the slight relaxation of the stringent requirements, in the case of those who, from their acquaintance with Theosophy, had been moved to apply as candidates for chelaship, telling, also, of the manifold obstacles these aspirants created for themselves, as a result of expectation of special favor or privilege. She described the precipitations in human nature which result from too casual an approach to a course which requires unremitting effort and personal self-sacrifice. Yet there remained hope for those who would follow the counsels of the Teachers, and who would continue to try.

The article, "Madame Blavatsky on 'The Himalayan Brothers,'" was sent by H.P.B. to the London *Spiritualist* (and published in that journal in the issue of Aug. 12, 1881) in reply to a writer who, claiming to be an 'adept,' had revealed his ignorance of the Eastern fraternity from which she had gained her instruction, and whose work she carried on in the world.

Again, in "Can the Mahatmas Be Selfish?" H.P.B. describes the conditions under which the adepts have relations with men in the world, showing that only through inward development of the latent qualities which correspond to the motives and interests of these high beings can ordinary persons hope to reach up to the plane of life and consciousness They represent. This article first appeared in *The Theosophist* for August, 1884.

### SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS!

**QUESTION 3** — *Recently the adoption of new science textbook standards by the State Board of Education (California) has kindled a flare-up of the old controversy between Scientists and Fundamentalists. The latter want to break up the present solid ranks of the evolutionists who have exclusive rights to the teaching in the public schools their version of the origin of life and of man. The controversy has been widely publicized in the daily press. It seems to be an irreconcilable problem. Who is right? What would a Theosophist have to say?*

**HELEN TODD** — There is no dictum among Theosophists as to what a Board of Education should adopt for a textbook, scientific or other; but a few observations may give some light on the apparent irreconcilability of Science and Religion. There would be no conflict were it not for the fact that we make our religions (and in one sense even our sciences) in our own image, so to speak. In a more enlightened age, when our mental and moral fiber has been purified and refined and our intuitions have awakened, religion and science will shine in their true lineaments and we shall find them to be but two aspects of One Truth. Meanwhile in these less perfect times we can reach some points of convergence by observation, study, and by weighing the merits and the weaknesses of each as they exist today.

Science now lacks what religion is *proverbially* supposed to give us: an awareness, in the universe about us, of a 'Presence' greater than ourselves, which inspires us with awe and reverence. Some peoples call this 'God' (though usually adding attributes which are very human); some may call it Nature; for others it is considered too holy to give it a name. Some think of it as 'Life'—and so it is.

Now the Creation myths of all peoples tell, often in quaint allegory, how the world came into being and was peopled with many forms of life. Such myths too often are dismissed as mere superstitions. Nevertheless they hold a key lost to Science: that the beginnings of Evolution are 'in the heavens'; that Life does not spring from the ooze of primordial slime, but descends from the Divine Source of all, each smallest particle containing, or, rather *being* a divine spark from this source. It is these divine sparks, impelled by their own inherent power, which move towards manifestation, clothing themselves in ever more material bodies as they 'descend' to earth.

Obviously, this is not science! And the scientists, rightly, steer clear of such metaphysical ideas, lest they wander

beyond the bounds of their elected domain. Yet it is all very well to be strictly scientific when a subject such as physics is the sphere of inquiry, experiment and teaching. However, how about Evolution? Is not Life the very core of the subject—Life proliferating in countless forms and degrees of development? Can Life be confined to the straightjacket of a chemical formula? The natural instinct of man rebels at this indignity.

We might suggest that the wisest teacher of evolution would be one who carries in his consciousness the truly religious conviction of man's noble heritage; and while keeping strictly to the scientific subject, would leave the door open for further and deeper investigation and inquiry. H. P. Blavatsky indicates (in *Isis Unveiled*, pp. 14-15) that it was not Darwin who closed this door, and says: "we are at liberty with him to remain either within, or cross the threshold, beyond which lies the limitless, the incomprehensible, or rather the *Unutterable*. If our mortal language is inadequate to express what our spirit dimly foresees in the great 'Beyond'—while on this earth—it *must* realize it at some point in the timeless Eternity."

With an expansion of consciousness might not a teacher by hint and suggestion awaken in some of his pupils those intuitions which give the real impetus to bold and imaginative inquiry? He could hardly fail to do so. To light the flame in another mind is the highest role of a teacher.

Unfortunately the modern textbook on evolution often tends to represent theory as fact. It fails to call sufficient attention to unresolved questions; it glosses over areas of uncertainties, contradictions and gaps in the logical argument. Apparently well constructed, such books in their very neatness and precision of presentation can be constrictive. They thus illustrate what some of the greatest scientists have pointed out: that much of formal education with its force-feeding of facts and ever more facts, chokes out the ability of the student to think creatively.

Evolution is a very controversial subject because it spans "that chasm separating the spiritual from the physical world," and thus partakes of both religion and science. A better understanding of the subject, apart from its present materialistic presentation is sorely needed.

### *The Esoteric Philosophy*

The Esoteric Philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the esoteric wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric Philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature.

—H. P. Blavatsky: *The Secret Doctrine*, I, xx

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Occult, a History*, by Colin Wilson, Random House, New York, 1971. 579 pages, with Bibliography and Index. \$10.00.

The author's thesis is stated in the Preface and summarized on the jacket cover:

"One day I believe man will have a sixth sense — a sense of the purpose of life, quite direct and un-inferred. This is Faculty X. And the paradox is that we already possess it to a large degree, but are unconscious of possessing it. It lies at the heart of all so-called 'occult' experience. It is with such experience that this book is concerned."

In exposition of this theme Mr. Wilson's fat volume discloses seemingly exhaustive research into far-reaching literature dealing with 'the occult' and the personal lives of 'adepts,' 'initiates' and 'magicians' — principally the last. In all the individuals discussed—from Pythagoras to Gurdjieff—the author proclaims his conviction that each did possess in varying degrees this occult Faculty X. What use the different 'magicians' made of their super-normal powers is a fascinating if often a tragic and in some cases a sordid story.

Among the many lives whose wordly successes and failures are ably chronicled, analyzed and appraised with evident sincerity and at least attempted fairness, are such names familiar to most students of Theosophy as Cornelius Agrippa, Apollonius of Tyana, Paracelsus, Cagliostro, Mesmer, Saint-Germain, Swedenborg, W.B. Yeats, Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Surprisingly, at least to this reviewer, into this distinguished company the author introduces such notorious or repulsive names as Casanova and Aleister Crowley, the details of whose 'occult' conquests or revolting 'magic' would be wholly out of place in a Theosophical periodical which is above all 'eclectic.'

The large picture of Mme. Blavatsky which appears in the text and on the jacket cover might be considered by general readers as a measure of the author's regard for H.P.B.'s occult standing, but Theosophists will be disappointed in his final appraisal. The author apparently accepts at their face-value the unfavorable conclusions of the Hodgson Report published by the Society for Physical Research in the early eighties of last century, and completely ignores H.P.B.'s insistence on lofty ethics, universal altruism and dedication to the motto of the Theosophical Society, "There is no religion higher than truth" as translated from Sanskrit, *Satyân nâsti paro dharmah*. H. P.B.'s dedication to these ideals is not only apparent in her devotional masterpiece, *The Voice of the Silence*, but is evident even in her earliest major work, *Isis Unveiled*. In this respect her life-work differs markedly from the careers of most of the 'occultists' with whom Mr. Wilson deals at length, and differs completely from the more disreputable of the 'magicians' discussed. Mr. Wilson does not stoop to the scurrilous attacks on H.P.B.'s personal life in which unscrupulous, ill-informed and sometimes vicious writers indulge with

malice aforethought. And while he is not so generous towards her as is Prof. Russell M. Goldfarb of Western Michigan University in a recent lengthy essay on H.P.B., Mr. Wilson does often give credit where credit is due, from the standpoint of an author who is writing on the Occult and not on universal ethics, philosophy and spiritual teachings, in which fields H.P.B. stands preeminent.

—IVERSON L. HARRIS

*Impact of Theosophy and Science, Modern Thought in the Light of Theosophy*, by A. Kannan, Foreword by Alfred Taylor, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India, 1971. 415 pages, including Appendices and Index. Cloth Rs. 21.00, Board Rs. 19.00, £1.80.

The title of this book is misleading. Is it meant, one asks, to show the impact of Theosophy on Science? Or possibly that of Theosophy and Science on world thought? And to what degree are Theosophy and Science considered synchronous? It isn't clear. The collaborators of this book cover the gamut of modern thought, ranging from the purely scientific to the metaphysical and the religious, and the evident intent is to correlate these with the many facets of Theosophy. The objective is worthy, and the effort that has gone into the production is to be commended.

While modern science in particular is not ready to accept several of the basic concepts of Theosophy, there is nothing in genuine Theosophy that runs counter to genuine science. However, it must be pointed out that some of the ideas brought out in this volume are misrepresentative of genuine Theosophical doctrines and cannot be taken seriously by thoughtful students in any branches of modern thought.

Within the community of the Theosophical Societies the above comment invariably would be regarded as a narrow-minded attitude stemming from a personality-worship of a specific Leader and rejection of all others. This is relatively unimportant because in our review of this book a non-parochial approach must be made. We must place ourselves in the position of the average reader who really wants to know what bearing Theosophy has on modern thought. We should discriminate between, on the one hand, Theosophy which will attract thinking men and women and will eventually prove to them to be an extension of their deeper thinking, and on the other hand those writings which unfortunately have made the popular concept of Theosophy a thing to be ridiculed.

The production of a book with the objectives of this one entails enormous responsibility, not only to Theosophists but more importantly to the public for whom the book is intended. Words uttered or printed can never be recalled, and it is the belief of this reviewer that the inclusion in this volume of certain psychically derived ideas promulgated in the name of Theosophy has done and will continue to do irreparable harm to the cause of Theosophy.

—L. GORDON PLUMMER

## Der Mensch im Kosmos

Mrs Harry Benjamin (Worthing, England) writes: "The day Irmgard Scheithauer (President, Berlin T.S. Lodge—Adyar) and I arrived at Unterlengenhardt (Germany), [October, 1972] Mary Linné had just received the first consignment of the beautifully produced book *Der Mensch im Kosmos*, and she was thrilled. They had to change the title because the publisher said there was already a book by the name *Man in Evolution*. But I think the new name is a much better title. I think you all will be pleased with this news—as far as I know the first of G. de P.'s books to be published by an Adyar firm!"

## The Book of Enoch

Wizard's Bookshelf (Savage, Minn.), which publishes Ralston Skinner's *The Source of Measures*, informs us that they have just issued a new revised 1883 edition of *The Book of Enoch*, translated by Laurence. They remind us that this is the best esoteric version of this classic and that it is mentioned 37 times in *The Secret Doctrine*. It has been a very rare item. Hard cover, 220 pp., \$6.00. Orders may be sent to Isis Books, 3234 University Ave., San Diego, 92104, or direct to Wizard's Bookshelf.

## Translations of our Literature into Finnish

Sylvi Kohva, Helsinki, Finland, writes that the Rosicrucian Society in Helsinki, in their journal has included some of her translations of G. de Purucker's *Wind of the Spirit* and the whole of Sven Eek's *Damodar: The Writings of a Hindu Chela*. They also have on sale G. de P.'s *Golden Precepts* and the booklet *Does Chance or Justice Rule Our Lives?* by Nils Amneus (both translated into Finnish.)

## Victor Endersby, Daniel Cohen—and the Defense of H.P.B.

Victor Endersby's Book, *The Hall of Magic Mirrors*, published in 1969, disposes, with careful scientific support, of all allegations of fraud and scientific error Cohen (and others) recklessly fling at H.P.B. Readers are referred particularly to pages 85-95 which point to major scientific triumphs of recent years which H.P.B. anticipated. If, as Endersby wryly comments, a mid-twentieth century scientist were transferred back to 1888 and talked then of quantum mechanics, he "would be tucked into the nearest booby hatch. Two hundred years ago he would have been lucky not to burn—especially if he put on a modest laboratory demonstration of his craft." p. 95) And then he adds: "The meaning of the famous 'phenomena' of H.P.B. is just that; she did put on a demonstration or two of the science of say 2050, and she did burn."

Mr. Endersby writes that he has a lengthy book in preparation that will expand this whole subject. Meanwhile, readers wanting to know some specifics of H.P.B.'s remarkable foreshadowings of scientific discoveries—the undulatory or corpuscular theory of light; the statement that energy and matter are one; the illusive nature of matter and the infinite divisibility of the atom; the existence of former great continents, Atlantis and Lemuria—to name only a few of her prophetic visionings, will find the above mentioned pages of *The Hall of Magic Mirrors* sufficiently informative.

In it the author also answers the charges of fraud made by those who alleged that H.P.B. and Damodar wrote the Mahatma Letters; he presents the professional opinion and analysis by Dr. Paul Kirk (p. 160) which completely contravenes this and vindicates H.P.B. Dr. Kirk was head of the Criminology Department of the University of California, one of the best known experts in the U.S.

Mr. Endersby wrote Daniel Cohen, author of *Masters of the Occult*, in which a chapter is devoted to H. P. Blavatsky (see No. 11 *Eclectic*, Open Letter from Iverson L. Harris to Daniel Cohen), offering to send Cohen a copy of his book, and also enclosing a xerox copy of Dr. Kirk's handwriting analysis—of the same handwriting samples which Hodgson used to 'convict' H.P.B. of inventing the handwriting of the mystic 'Mahatmas'. To this Cohen replied—as vapid a letter as we've ever seen—obviously unwilling to give the matter honest and thorough study and repeating his claim that H.P.B. was totally 'insignificant' and a complete fraud.

We hear now from Mr. Endersby that he is making preparations to continue the printing of his *Theosophical Notes*, which pressure of other duties has interrupted for some time. It is hoped that in its first re-started issue he will share with his readers this exchange of letters.

Copies of Endersby's *The Hall of Magic Mirrors* may be obtained for three dollars direct from the author: Box 427, Napa, Calif. 94558; or from Isis Books, c/o Kenneth Small, 3234 University Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92104.

## "A Co-Founder of the Society, William Q. Judge"

Emory P. Wood, Edmonton, Canada, writes:

In addition to the First Message to the American Theosophists, I find that Olcott himself referred to Judge as a co-founder. In 1889 Judge submitted an article to *The Theosophist* under the title "Centres of the Theosophical Movement" which was withheld from publication by Olcott for reasons set forth in an article of the same name (Sept. 1889 issue), from which I quote:

"My old friend and colleague and a Co-Founder of the Society, Mr. William Q. Judge, has sent me a long article taking exception to certain ideas embodied in two articles which appeared in the June *Theosophist*. They are respectively entitled "Applied Theosophy" and "The Situation."

Mrs. Besant also, as President of Blavatsky Lodge, wrote a letter on March 11th 1892 to the members of the Lodge in connection with the election of Mr. Judge as President, following the resignation of Olcott—later rescinded. She says:

"I therefore say frankly to you that, in my view, the present Vice-President and remaining Co-Founder of the Society, William Quan Judge, is the most suitable person to guide the Society, and one who cannot with justice be passed over."

The point is: In 1889 Olcott referred to Judge as a co-founder, and in 1895 when he wrote the Foreword to *Old Diary Leaves*, there were only two founders.

## Convention at The Hague

Jan Molijn, of Heemstede, Holland, writes:

The National Convention of the T.S.—H.P.B. (formerly Point Loma) was held at The Hague on 24th September, 1972. The program ran somewhat as follows: 10 o'clock: Making each others' acquaintance. 10:30: gong, opening. A few communications. Introduction: "On the Influence and Power of Thought", by Jaap Versluis. Music. Intermission for collective lunch. 14 o'clock: music. Talk on "Pilot on Board" by Arien Smit. Tea. Discourse "On Meditation" by Dr. K. E. Freitag. Close of Convention. Gong.

Synopsis of Arien Smit's address: Approaching dangerous channels, he said, the wise captain gladly accepts the guidance of a pilot, though the former remains responsible for the ship's weal or woe. The world today has also arrived in turbulent waters, and is in dire need of a good pilot. This condition is due to the fact that the vernal equinoctial point has just about entered the zodiacal sign of Aquarius, due to which—as H.P.B., opening a new Messianic cycle, said—our psychologists will have extra work to do. We therefore live in a period of transition, and the wave of psychism that we are experiencing—as was the case with the ancient Romans—was also signalized by Prof. C. Jung, in Vol. 10 of his *Collected Works*, p. 311. He, too, was concerned for all those who would be caught unprepared by the psychical changes to be expected at the end of the present era, and which are so ably discussed in the *C.F.L. Bulletin*, No. 325, September 1972, of the Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists in Great Britain.

In this connection Bro. Smit also referred to G. de P.'s Letter to the General Council of the English Section, T.S., April 21, 1934, where he says: "The Masters . . . foresaw the need of introducing into the thought-life of the world . . . teachings which would stem the inrushing tide of psychism which the modern world was about to face . . ." So our all-important task as Theosophists is to be responsible captains, to study and widely promulgate the redeeming teachings of the Ancient Wisdom brought by our great pilot H.P.B., and to exemplify them in our daily lives.

Then Dr. Freitag spoke on Meditation. He referred to Jaap Versluis' talk on the potency of thought, and continued, briefly, as follows: If we think universally and our thinking is fed by the divine power as our innermost being, this may lead to meditation. If this is not the case, and the thought has an object, there is not unity but duality, i.e. there is a separation between the thinker and his object. Genuine meditation, however restores the all-oneness, Brahman, or in Jewish mysticism, Yachad. The West tries to realize this union by consciously penetrating deeper and deeper into the source of our human being. This is meditation from the outside inwards, through the phases of concentration, contemplation, and silence. The title of H.P.B.'s precious gem *The Voice of the Silence* does not express a paradox, for the Absolute in the Universe does not manifest itself through our sense perceptions. Therefore, it is a tragic mistake in Christianity to picture God in any way. As far as the resurrection is concerned, this can take place in a human being by mystically experiencing the divine spark in his innermost Self, and the divine power which thereby manifests in him. True meditation realizes this resurrection here and now. According to the apocryphal gospel of Thomas, Jesus once said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is come, but you do not see it." It is timeless and uni-

versal, it is inside as Âtman. It is from Âtman that real meditation starts; not from the outside inwards, but from the inside outwards. Detachment from all that makes us dependent on the transitory world is a prerequisite. It is the way from the supernal source in ourselves to our consciousness, our spiritual and emotional life. This meditation never leads to ecstasy, and has no need of drugs, but is the only true basis and guide in our lives. It gives us the holy experience of our alliance with the entire cosmos, with all humanity, and implicitly with all-love. This meditation delivers man from loneliness, from disharmony, from enslavement to his own objectives, possessions, desires and his 'ego'. We could express this sublime thought by the wonderful Sanskrit phrase *Âtmanam âtmanâ paśya*, i.e., *I experience the Self through the self*. Then the radiation from the divine within us passes through our entire constitution and leads us back to our pristine source—J.M.

#### Comment on The Eclectic

Prof. Dr. J. H. Dubbink, on page 426 of *Theosophia*, November 1972, monthly journal of the Theosophical Society (Adyar), Dutch Section, reviews recent issues of *The Eclectic Theosophist*: "This publication," he says, "deserves the attention of every serious student of the various aspects of Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement. The name indicates that the editors try to make a choice among matters which are important to the entire Theosophical Movement, and that they do not want to bind themselves to any one of the splinterings that the Theosophical Movement has undergone. Therefore, it is a pity that they yet situate themselves within the framework of one of these groupings by using the name Point Loma."

Prof. Dubbink then discusses a number of articles; among others, by Boris de Zirkoff ("Two Schools"); "The Hidden Voice" ("a reaction to a poor article by Shearman"); a good article by Jan H. Venema from The Hague, in line with his appearance on television; an article by Dr. K. E. Freitag; and one, "Death, a Birth Celestial", by Jan Molijn . . . "There are paragraphs about correspondence, reprints of articles by de Purucker, Questions and Answers by various members of the Point Loma Society, who are well versed in the views of H.P.B. and her friends. All in all—in spite of the name—a cordial recommendation to all to support this publication, if only by reading it and sending in reactions."—J.M.

### FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

*Emmi Haerter and Mary Linné, Bad Liebenzell, West Germany.*—Since we promised G. de P. in 1933 to help spread Theosophy we have made it our main task to translate his books, because in those days there were only two of his books in German, *Das Theosophische Wörterbuch* and *Die goldenen Regeln der Esoterik*. We began translating under the supervision of Philip A. Malpas, and possess now a complete translation of *Dialogues* and *The Esoteric Tradition*, which we have given out manifolded and not as books. There were two manuscripts left from George Salfrank's time: *Man in Evolution* and *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, the first a good translation, the second not so good. As you know, helping us we asked Dr. Norbert Laupert, editor of the books of the T.S. Adyar, a very good friend of ours, to publish *Man in Evolution* in German. He agreed, and so it will appear this month, just thirty years after G. de P.'s going home. The German title will be *Der Mensch im Kosmos*. The second manuscript we handed over to another friend of ours of the Dr. Franz Hartman tradition to translate anew. He is our best helper in the translation work. Moreover, every now and then some articles of G. de P.'s other works are brought out in our bimonthly *Der Theosophische Pfad*.

Besides this activity we think it our duty to go on with the Fraternization Movement G. de P. founded in 1931, and I may say that this activity of ours is very successful. At our Convention in Büdingen this June (1972) there were representatives of other theosophical groups, and lectures were given by Dr. Laupert and another member of the T.S., Adyar, Irmgard Scheithauer, as well as by a member belonging to the Calw-Wimberg T.S. (of the Franz Hartmann tradition). The Convention proceeded in a perfectly harmonious way according to the spirit of Theosophy, and we did not feel any difference in opinion. The same feeling we got at the 70-years jubilee of the T.S. Adyar at Bad Homburg in August and at the summerschool in Pichl, Austria, of the T.S. Adyar. We really feel at home among them, and we think the time has come when we should have only one Theosophical Society.

*Jan H. Venema, The Hague, Holland.*—Yesterday we came together for the Winter Solstice, and many came from Arnhem, Alphen on the Rhine, Utrecht, The Hague . . . a wonderful meeting. And what does not often happen in December in Holland, it was a day almost

like early Spring, sun and mild weather, one of those happy days which we may have now and then during winter after the November storms and probably before the severe frosts of January-February . . . Both here and at Arnhem we are preparing a symposium for the public celebration of the Winter Solstice, which symposium I based on parts of Dr. Francis Merchant's books. It will be performed on December 19th. It embraces the well-known passing on of the Light, with a beautiful ceremony and two songs.

*Chr. Le Lorrain, Naarden, Holland.*—Your *Eclectics* are a great help. We realize now that all over the world there are people with the same ideals, who are faithful to the Masters, and to H.P.B. It reminds me of what H.P.B. said at the end of her life, how she had a vision of the future of many Theosophists not being real ones and only a few being true to Theosophy; but that this small group was larger than we thought it was . . . Theosophical ideas and principles are gaining ground more and more. We can see that on television, in books, papers and magazines, in films. It is spreading gradually. Let us keep on trying to do our best to help in that way by our thoughts and words and acts.

*Margherita Sirén, Bromma, Sweden.*—I read with interest the article on the meaning or interpretation of the word 'Eclectic' (Dec. 1971 issue), as you understood it. I think, however, that this is a term which will vary greatly in its interpretation—each one applying his or her own personal views and associations to it. Generally speaking, for all philosophically-minded people the thought that first comes to mind is the application of this term to adherents of ancient schools of philosophy, as you yourself say, Plato and the Stoics, etc. And also, I'm altogether with you when you say that one of the aims of your bi-monthly will be to publish items from other sources which corroborate the teachings of Theosophy. We have always been taught that Theosophy is the root and essence of all religions, and that much in the great religions of the world, if interpreted rightly, will be found to coincide with Theosophy. It does seem rather paradoxical, however, that the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* also states that this term refers to "ancient philosophers selecting such doctrines as pleased him in every school; (person) borrowing freely from various sources, not exclusive in opinion, taste, etc." (Underlining mine, M.S.) This latter definition is directly contradictory to our claim that Theosophy is the source of all religions! It is therefore I feel that the interpretations of this word 'Eclectic' will be many and varied.

But it is not this aspect that jarred me. The impression that came to me was: "Ah, here you are—we are the broadminded ones!"—though I grant that this is a freer interpretation and not so strictly in keeping with the dictionary sense. I fully appreciate it was difficult for you to find a title for this paper which would distinguish it from all the many others that are being published by so many groups, and therefore I repeat that my remark was not intended as any form of criticism . . . Well, I have again spoken out, as you hoped I would not hesitate to do, and it does perhaps help to be able to ventilate one's thoughts and ideas at times.

*Evangeline Farrell, Butler, N.J.*—After receiving *Clothed With the Sun* and *The Mahâtmas and Genuine Occultism* I felt an irresistible urge to give them to everyone I know. (With her letter came a substantial order! EDS.)

*Leona Sterba, Oklahoma City, Okla.*—Re *The Esoteric Tradition*, I am more than ever convinced that that is the book which all classes in Theosophy should start out with. Since I first showed it to my group I haven't got to see hide nor hair of it. They latched on to both volumes at once and have taken turns taking them home with them . . . It has been my contention all along, and it is being reinforced daily, that serious students are only repelled by being offered food for babes, even to start with. I so well remember my own feelings the first time I heard of Theosophy in the ULT meeting in N.Y.C. Although there had been nothing in my background (this time around) to prepare me for it, still I felt "here is something grand and wonderful!" and I was stimulated to eagerly try to learn more about it. Whereas, had I been offered baby-food I should probably have left the meeting and forgotten it next day.

*Richard Sattelberg, Buffalo, N.Y.*—*The Eclectic Theosophist* of 11-15-72 contained some striking letters. Mr. Small was certainly in the right, I think, in his reply to Shearman. Shearman occasionally tries to undermine the authority of both H.P.B. and the Mahâtmas, which he clearly shows in his letter to the Editors. *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* contain numerous examples of statements later verified by science. If said statements are not examples of fact I'd like to know what is, and philosophically speaking certainly illustrate what is meant by the Correspondence Theory of Truth. To dismiss statements of a Master of Wisdom is a serious action. Perhaps Dr. Shearman feels he is more knowledgeable than the Masters—a facetious point indeed.